

## ABSTRACT

The present invention employs a statistical multiplexing method to enable suitable assignment of a target code rate to each program data. A controller (3) acquires encoding difficulty ( $D_i$ ) of each program from each of image encoders ( $2_i$ ). In accordance with an equation for transforming the encoding difficulty ( $D_i$ ) into a bit rate, the controller (3) calculates a temporary bit rate ( $Tmp\_Rate_i$ ). Moreover, the controller (3) causes the sum of the target bit rates ( $Target\_Rate_i$ ) to satisfy a predetermined allowable value by correcting the temporary bit rate ( $Tmp\_Rate_i$ ) so as to determine a final target bit rate ( $Target\_Rate_i$ ) and inputting the final target bit rate ( $Target\_Rate_i$ ) to each of the image encoders ( $2_i$ ).

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